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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
21 December 1971

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

India-Pakistan Situation Report
(As of 1530 EST)

Release of Sheikh Mujib

1. President Bhutto today announced that East Pakistani leader Mujibur Rahman will be released from prison "soon" and put under some form of house arrest. Bhutto declined to say where Mujib is currently being held or where (presumably in West Pakistan) he will be permitted to reside after release. It is widely felt that Mujib's early return to Bangla Desh is necessary to provide a unifying element in the effort to form an effective government there.

Government Assignments

2. In a move to shake up the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with which he has had misgivings, President Bhutto named Aziz Ahmad as secretary general of the ministry. The new post is apparently senior to that of the foreign secretary, formerly the senior civil servant in the ministry. Aziz Ahmad--ambassador to Washington from 1959 to 1963--served as foreign secretary from 1963 to 1966 when Bhutto was foreign minister. They agreed closely on foreign policy, and both were strong advocates of closer relations with Peking. Ahmad at times has reportedly been much more suspicious of US motives than Bhutto.

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3. Bhutto has reserved for himself the defense and foreign affairs portfolios. East Pakistani Nurul Amin has been tapped as vice president. Additional cabinet assignments are expected shortly. Yesterday Bhutto issued a series of directives, including one calling for the release of students, laborers, and peasants jailed by the Yahya government.

Thinking Among the Pakistan Military

4. Acting Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army, Lieutenant General Gul Hassan, reportedly recognizes the inevitability of military defeat for Pakistan if war with India erupts again on the western front. [redacted] the general acknowledges Pakistan's inability to match the Indian Army's superior lines of communication and supply or its manpower sources now that there is a possibility of massive Indian troop reinforcements from the eastern front. Gul Hassan also cited the logistical problem in obtaining military supplies from China, particularly during the winter, and implied Pakistan would be better off to avoid renewed conflict and the resultant loss of military equipment.

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5. Many senior Pakistani military officers, in the aftermath of their demoralizing defeat in Bangla Desh, continue to rationalize the quick Indian victory in terms of Soviet assistance to India. Gul Hassan commented that a Soviet military group in New Delhi was advising the Indian Army throughout the campaign in the eastern province. Pakistani officers also maintain that Soviet aircraft continuously monitored the flights of the Pakistan Air Force by operating two long-range radar aircraft in a circular orbit off the southern coast of West Pakistan.

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6. There is no evidence that any Soviet aircraft were operating off the coast of Pakistan at any time during the war. Furthermore, it is unclear what type of "radar picket aircraft" Gen. Gul Hassan is referring to. The only Soviet aircraft specially constructed to perform as an airborne air-surveillance radar platform is the TU-126 Moss, which is similar to the large Soviet TU-95 strategic bomber and the TU-114 long-range transport. The Soviets have only nine TU-126 Moss aircraft and these are all based in the Baltic Sea area as part of the USSR's strategic air-defense network.

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India-Bangla Desh Relationship

7. The India--Bangla Desh relationship is still evolving, but some preliminary indications of the course it will take are now evident. A treaty already exists providing for Indian economic assistance--possibly in excess of $250 million--with emphasis on rehabilitation assistance for returning refugees. A pool of Indian technical experts in such fields as transportation, communications, agriculture will be made available to the Bangla Desh government.

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[redacted] the treaty specifies that neither party will enter into defense/security arrangements with third countries if this is prejudicial to the interests of the other. India's Policy Planning Committee Chairman, D. P. Dhar, has been named "special envoy" to Bangla Desh for the present. Reportedly, there is unanimous agreement in government circles in New Delhi that Indian troops should not be stationed in Bangla Desh any longer than necessary to ensure law and order during the transition period.

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Situation in Dacca

8. Despite blood-chilling reports of atrocities being perpetrated by revenge-seeking Bengalis in Dacca, some progress toward normalcy is apparent. The transportation system is slowly being reactivated. Civil servants in Dacca are assessing the food situation and working on reconstruction programs, including the rehabilitation of refugees. The currency and banking situation is still unclear but a directive has been issued banning dealings in securities and other financial instruments. There is no firm date for the seating of the Bangla Desh government in Dacca, and it is presumed the key figures are still in Calcutta attempting to apportion responsibilities. Dacca papers continue to report that the Bangla Desh prime minister has said he will not accept US assistance.

9. According to Bangla Desh Secretary General Quddus, UN assistance will probably be needed, but it will be 3 to 4 weeks before specifics can be discussed with UN representatives. The UN staff in Dacca is expected to be held to about ten, following the airlift of a group of UN personnel to Bangkok today.

10. [redacted] Indian military authorities in Dacca have detained self-styled Mukti Bahini leader Abdul Siddiqui who encouraged the torture and murder of four men at a recent public rally. [redacted] the Indians believe they have already disarmed most of the armed guerrillas who have been roaming the streets of Dacca.

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Calcutta-Dacca Air Link

12. The Indian press reports that India's national airline soon will inaugurate air service between Calcutta and towns in Bangla Desh. According to airlines personnel, however, it will be at least two weeks before the badly damaged Dacca airport will be ready for regular commercial flights. [redacted] about 5000 feet of the runway will become operative on 24 December.

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ANNEX

Bhutto's Foreign Policy Views

1. In The Myth of Independence, largely written in 1967 but published in 1969, Z.A. Bhutto set forth his views on Pakistan's foreign policy. Although changing circumstances may well have altered some of his thinking, the book probably gives the best picture available of the basic assumptions which will govern Pakistan's relations with other nations while Bhutto is President.

2. Basic to Bhutto's thinking is the threat from India. In his view, "relations between India and Pakistan should resemble those between Sweden and Norway," but "fed on centuries of hatred, their sense of injury received at Muslim hands reinforced by religious dogma, all Hindu movements have conceived the assimilation of the Muslim minority as part of their political objective." Indian leaders accepted the partition of British India in the hope that Pakistan "would not be viable and would collapse under pressure from its larger and more powerful neighbor....It is clear that Indian leaders have come to tolerate Pakistan, because they do not have the power to destroy her." If the Indians had the power, "they would end partition and reabsorb Pakistan into the India of their dreams."

3. "To enable us to face the rising tide of difficulties with India, Pakistan must pursue: 1) a policy of friendship and good faith with China, a great power with whom its basic interests conform; and 2) good relations with the United States and the Soviet Union, but without preconditions & on the basis of noninterference."

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4. Bhutto believes that "positions taken by the three global powers are determined not by their treaty relations nor by the extent of India's or Pakistan's identification with them, but by their global aims." Thus, neither the friendship nor the hostility of Moscow and Washington is likely to be permanent.

5. In The Myth of Independence, Bhutto wrote that US and Pakistani interests were in conflict. During the 1960s, US "relations with India and Pakistan were governed by the philosophy of 'containing' Communist China through a ring of neutral nations." In 1963, "concluding that the breach between the nations of the subcontinent was final, the United States decided to ignore Pakistan's fears and render long-term military assistance to India." Nevertheless, "when relations between China and the United States take a more realistic turn, the United States may be less hostile to Pakistan's friendly relations with China."

6. Although at that time Bhutto thought that Moscow's "traditional policy of complete identification with non-aligned India" had "undergone some alteration on account of changes in the global situation," he devoted little space to Pakistani-Soviet relations and apparently believed that Islamabad's actions had little effect on what Moscow would do.

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